

To Whom This Concerns,

CREC Magnet Schools are fantastic. Both of our children attend GHAA, one in the middle school and one in the high school. The best thing we have ever done for them is apply them to these schools. They are both incredibly happy, are learning so much. They have amazing teachers and have made so many friends with kids that they never would have met otherwise.

Our younger daughter started the school in 6th grade last year. She learned more in 6th grade at GHAAMS than my older daughter had learned in the 3 years she was in our town middle school. It is an encouraging and nurturing environment full of people who want to see these children succeed. The communication between the teachers and parents is great. Any concerns that we may have are addressed very quickly. We have had teachers reach out to us just to update us on her progress or to see if we have any ideas to help her succeed. It's a great feeling to know that the teachers and staff care as much as we do as her parents.

Our older daughter started the full day program at GHAA this year as a freshman. She has always liked school but it's different somehow now. She WANTS to be there and is even more eager to learn than she previously was. She was incredibly disappointed that they had so many snow days in a row recently. Though GHAA was not her first choice of school, she is developing into a great writer and absolutely loves everything about it.

It would be a great disservice to all of the children who attend to take away funding that is allowing them to flourish in a smaller, very positive educational environment and allowing them to put a big focus on the things that they are really interested in. Being as they all have similar interests, these kids encourage and support each other in ways that don't happen in other schools. We have seen the difference this has made in our kids on a daily basis. Increased confidence and happiness is something that all kids should have the chance to experience.

As much as they may claim to or want to, most towns are not able to give kids this experience or type of learning environment. We do hope that this situation is not taken lightly. We can't imagine putting our kids back into our town schools and what effect it would have on them.

Thank you,
Denise and Mark O'Marra

Magnet schools are important because they're tailored to students' interests. For example, Aerospace is for people more into science, technology, engineering, and math. That school can't function without funding.

The Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts is an amazing school. Everyone needs a school like it; with people who share interests, teachers that care about students, half the day devoted just to their interests, and smaller class sizes.

The first half of the day is like any other high school. Regular classes, 3 minute passing time, and of course tests and homework. But the second half the day, the arts half, is something that you can't find in any other school. Classes tailored for the exact form of art you love, people that you can almost instantly bond with, and teachers that become some of the most involved adults in your life.

Though I haven't even been in the school an entire year yet, I can't imagine being anywhere else. In the Creative Writing department, the teachers fully respect you not wanting or not being able to comfortably share your pieces. The other students are some of the most supportive kids you'll meet.

-Mikayla O'Marra
9th Grade, GHAA

GHAAMS is important to me because it's different from other ~normal schools where there are art classes maybe once a day but at GHAMMS we have an arts class everyday. GHAAMS is also great because all the teachers try to help you out if you need help and are always supportive of their students.

-Ashlynn O'Marra
7th Grade, GHAAMS